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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 002839

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREF](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY ISLAMABAD P1 REFERRAL: FAMILY OF JOHN
SOLECKI'S DRIVER/INTERPRETER

1. (SBU) Summary: Embassy Islamabad hereby refers for P1 U.S. resettlement consideration/in-country processing the family of Syed Hashim, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) staff member killed by a Baloch nationalist group on February 2, 2009 at the time of the kidnapping of U.S. citizen John Solecki, then head of UNHCR's Sub-Office in Quetta, Pakistan. Mr. Hashim's family members face a combination of risks due to their UN affiliation, Hazara ethnicity, U.S. association through Solecki, vulnerable status as a female-headed household and family survivors of a terrorist attack, and rumored compensation package which makes them an attractive target for abduction. An individual who previously sought to extort funds for information on Mr. Solecki's place of detention has also approached Mr. Hashim's family seeking to determine their financial status. As Mr. Hashim's family is still located in Pakistan, UNHCR Islamabad cannot refer them to USRAP and has requested the U.S. to consider them for an Embassy referral and in-country processing. UNHCR has outlined the risks and well-founded fears they face. In a Pakistani environment of heightened insecurity and targeted attacks on UN staff, it is in the U.S. interest to support a key UN humanitarian assistance partner in its efforts to support and protect the family of a fallen colleague. Mr. Hashim's legal permanent resident brother (in the U.S. since 2000) has indicated an interest in supporting the family's integration into the U.S. END
SUMMARY

BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

2. (SBU) Embassy Islamabad refers for P1 U.S. resettlement consideration/in-country processing the following five (5) family members of Syed Hashim (deceased):

Name: KHAUNUM, Zahara
Relationship to Principal Applicant: Self
DPOB: December 17, 1959, Quetta, Pakistan
Gender: Female
Nationality: Pakistani
Passport: C575039 (expired)
Current Address/Location: House No. 7-47/6A, Syed Abad, Alamdar Road, Quetta, Pakistan
Phone: 92-81-2668825

Name: KAZMI, Nadi
Relationship to Principal Applicant: Daughter
DPOB: March 25, 1983, Quetta, Pakistan
Nationality: Pakistani
Passport: photo and personal data on mother's expired passport
Current Address/Location: same as above

Name: KAZMI, Syed Mujtaba
Relationship to Principal Applicant: Son
DPOB: September 1, 1988, Quetta, Pakistan
Nationality: Pakistani

Passport: photo and personal data on mother's expired passport
Current Address/Location: same as above

Name: SHAH, Syed Tayyab Shah
Relationship to Principal Applicant: Son
DPOB February 15, 1991, Quetta, Pakistan
Nationality: Pakistani
Passport: listed with photo on mother's expired passport
although birth date is incorrect
(Birth certificate is also available.)
Current

Address/Location: same as above

Name: KAZMI, Sadia
Relationship to Principal Applicant: Daughter
DPOB January 18, 1994, Quetta, Pakistan
Nationality: Pakistani
Passport: listed with photo on mother's expired passport
although birth date is incorrect
(Birth certificate is also available.)
Current Address/Location: same as above

REASON FOR REFERRAL/U.S. INTEREST

13. (SBU) In a Pakistani environment of heightened insecurity and targeted attacks on UN staff, the role of UN local employees becomes all the more important and the risks they face all the greater. In this volatile and policy critical part of the world, UNHCR plays an essential role in providing assistance to 1.7 million Afghan refugees and a

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conflict-displaced local population which peaked at 2.8 million. It is in the U.S. interest, and is the right and humanitarian thing to do, to support this key UN humanitarian assistance partner in its efforts to support and protect the family of a fallen colleague. Mr. Hashim was also killed while supporting a U.S. citizen.

PERSECUTION CLAIM

14. (SBU) Syed Hashim's family members have reason to fear harm due to a combination of factors including their association with both UNHCR and the U.S. A Baloch nationalist group claimed responsibility for the February 2, 2009 kidnapping of U.S. citizen and UNHCR Sub-Office Head John Solecki and for the killing Mr. Hashim, his driver and interpreter. According to UNHCR, the kidnapping and killing were part of the Baloch group's effort to raise the profile of human rights abuses in Balochistan and to protest the U.N.'s perceived silence with respect to the government's military action, long-standing civilian displacement, and human rights abuse in Balochistan. Subsequent to Mr. Solecki's release some months later, Baloch militants have declared the UN to be a "legitimate" target and cited the lack of UN humanitarian response in Balochistan compared to robust cooperation with the government in providing humanitarian assistance in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). The UN has since had limited to no operations in Balochistan for security reasons.

15. (SBU) This ethnically Hazara family also has reason to fear the targeting of Hazaras by Baloch nationalists. As law enforcement responsibilities have passed from police to paramilitary forces in Balochistan, there has been an increase in reported arbitrary arrests and disappearances of Baloch students and activists. These events have been met with a series of targeted killings of non-Baloch, particularly Hazaras. Designated as "settlers", Hazaras, like Mr. Hashim's family, are seen by Baloch separatists as taking Baloch jobs and resources and being part of a larger State plan to change the ethnic demography, and the balance

of power, in Balochistan.

¶6. (SBU) In addition to Baloch nationalists, Pakistani Taliban also have targeted UN agencies. This targeting is reflected in the bombing of the UN World Food Program (WFP) in Islamabad, and the prior killing of a senior UNHCR local staff member in Kacha Gari IDP camp near Peshawar. Both Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani Taliban have sought to disable UN humanitarian assistance which bolsters the efforts of the Government of Pakistan to support the Pakistani population. Pakistani national staff are essential to UN operations in general, and UNHCR's operations in specific, particularly in light of the increasingly dangerous security situation for, and heightened security restrictions on, international staff. Nothing would have a more chilling effect on the essential participation of Pakistani national staff than the targeting of the family members of an already victimized colleague. The numerous bombings over the last few weeks of military, police and intelligence facilities in rural and urban areas in several provinces are evidence of the lack of effective State protection available. UNHCR also argues that the perceived U.S. pressure, widely covered in the media, for the Pakistani military to confront the Taliban in South Waziristan also puts those affiliated with the U.S. at risk.

¶7. (SBU) In addition, Mr. Hashim's family members have security concerns based on the local community's belief that the family received significant sums in compensation and life insurance from the UN. This belief makes family members a prime target for abduction. Such concerns were exacerbated in March when the family was approached by an individual purporting to be a friend of the deceased and trying to determine the family's financial status. An investigation by the UN Department of Safety and Security and the relevant Pakistani intelligence agency determined that this individual had also attempted to extort money from the UN in exchange for information related to Mr. Solecki's detention. UNHCR considered internal relocation options for Mr. Hashim's family, as the family has extended relatives in Karachi, but it was determined that joining the Hazara community there would present the same danger as in Quetta.

NEED FOR RESETTLEMENT

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¶8. (SBU) Mr. Hashim's family lacks a durable solution to their current situation. For the reasons stated above, they fear and risk serious harm, based on their UN affiliation, Hazara ethnicity, U.S. association, and perceived new wealth, if they remain in Pakistan.

RECOMMENDATION

¶9. (SBU) Based on the aforementioned grounds, UNHCR has requested that the U.S. facilitate resettlement to the U.S. of Mr. Hashim's family, and post recommends in-country consideration for P1 refugee resettlement.

¶10. (SBU) There is no neighboring country (Afghanistan, India, Iran, or China) which would afford safety and security as a country of first asylum for this female-headed household. Remaining at home pending processing would provide some socio-economic stability for a family already traumatized by the loss of their husband/father.

¶10. (SBU) Mr. Hashim's brother Syed Haider Shah Kazmi, who has resided in California since 2000 and is currently a legal permanent resident, has indicated a wish to support Mr. Hashim's family's integration into the U.S.

EMBASSY CONTACT INFORMATION

¶11. (SBU) For additional information, please contact
Islamabad Refugee Coordinator, Liane Dorsey (92-51-208-2689;
DorseyLR@state.gov)

PATTERSON